TOWARDS THE USE OF IMAGES ON THE WEB

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It could be the task of a new scientific magazine dealing with images to question themselves about the studies that can be done on the heritage of images on the web, rather than aiming only to create new ones. Behind the methods of selection and production of images there are informations that can interest both the psychologist and the anthropologist, both the visual culture scholar and the architect. What considerations can we draw from the hyper-production of contemporary images? What use can be made of photographs, illustrations, graphics, drawings collected on the web that go beyond the immediate aesthetic enjoyment and superficial reception of the messages they carry with them? The high degree of problematic that this kind of investigations suggests reveals a particular wealth of themes for those who wish to investigate image-mediated knowledge available on the Web.

Our alleged network of knowledge seems today to be structured not on the paper heritage but on the digital one, not so much on the text as on the images. We constantly live in an overload of informations that is difficult to manage and we think that images make them more understandable and immediate to be grasped and examined. On the other hand, Fichte himself recognized that "knowledge starts from image or representation" (Vercellone, 2017, p.19).

Keeping up with the statistics of the various *image-sharing* or *photo storage* websites is practically impossible, given the constant acceleration of the phenomenon of production and image sharing. It is estimated that every two minutes in the United States alone are shooted more photographs than in the entire nineteenth century. But to professional and amateur photographs we need to add the images produced by scientists, artists, architects, graphic designers, viewers and 3D artists, drawings, infographics and graphic notations, x-rays, cartographies, illustrations, and so on, not to mention moving images. To the new images produced we must then add the historical images that flow back into the Net following the digitization of the library and archival heritage, images that belong to analogical production practices of the past, today cultivated by a few virtuous ones.

A version of that Encyclopedic Palace by Marino Auriti, borrowed by Massimiliano Gioni to give the title in 2013 to one of the best editions of the Venice International Art Exhibition, seems to be recognized on the Net. The imaginary museum conceived by Auriti and patented by him in 1955 as an ideal container of all the humanity's knowledge –an ideal shared with all those who, over time, have tried to "build an image of the world"– seems to recognize itself in the stratified accumulation of images shared in the Net.

Since there is not a single maker to structure the knowledge or the taxonomic organization of materials, in the Net the images cannot be recalled in an order that can be defined oriented, immediately and univocally recognizable, because

they always emerge organized by analogical associations, according to parameters indexing that do not refer only to their contents and their characteristics.

So if Gioni's exhibition proposed to develop an investigation into the ways in which images are used by artists "to organize knowledge and to shape our experience of the world" (Gioni, 2013), it comes to mind if it would not be appropriate to think more to how to study the heritage of images already present and available on the Web, rather than indiscriminately producing new ones. This is one of the possible challenges that a scientific magazine dedicated to images can take to make a contribution to one's time.

From a quick search on the Web it is possible to see how the Network itself provides numerous and up-to-date instructions and information on how to search for images, how to download them or withdraw them (possibly without payment), on copyright issues and how to circumvent them, on how to make other people's images their own, in essence, how to make websites, social profiles and blogs more captivating through images able to capture the attention and burn instantly. Little or nothing can be learned from search engines about what can be learned from the images of the Web, about how they should be interpreted beyond marketing strategies, what "image-world" can be deduced from them.

In the field of architecture, for example, we begin to pay particular attention to photographs taken and shared by ordinary people in the planned places, to better understand the use made of them. We can probably trace back to 2006, the first monographic publication of an international architectural firm –the Dutch studio OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture)–, in which the projects are not presented through the shots of professional photographers, officially commissioned by the design studio, but through a sampling of photos published on the Web. The intent, made explicit in the premise of the publication, is that of not wanting to put the qualities of buildings at the center, but rather to monitor their effects by users and visitors (AMO/Rem Koolhaas, 2006).

Along the same lines, a few years later, in setting the editorial line of a new monograph (Ruby I. & A., 2013), the MVRDV architecture and urbanism practice will be looking in the Web for new shots of its projects, taken by amateur photographers, to tell what is noticed about their buildings and their spaces by common passers-by, users and visitors.

Photographs and videos shared on social media and on *photo-storage* sites are effectively changing the way, not only to look at architecture and the city, but also to modify the same design parameters giving more and more weight, for example, to the *storytelling* artifice. Dana Behrman, Senior Urban Designer by UNStudio (United Network Studio), recently stated: "We look at social media, at images that people post", because from the pictures it's possible to see "how do they actually appropriate the spaces, that are often times different from what we image to be". "The more a building is capable of engaging somehow the visitors beyond the program that it is meant to solve, at least from a certain point of view, the more it is successful today" added Giacomo Ardesio by AMO/OMA (PLAN-SITE, 2019).

The social aspect of architecture is therefore something that is constantly reinvented by the society that appropriates it, and we witness it through a heterogeneous production of images. horizons. The photographs of architectures and urban spaces on the Web, for example, provide informations on which different skills can actually work and compare, in a way that goes beyond the disciplinary barriers on which the "scientifically ordered" knowledge was built. After all, as pointed out by David Weinberger: "Networked knowledge is less certain but more human. Less settled but more transparent. Less reliable but more inclusive. Less consistent but far richer" (Weinberger, 2012, p. XV).

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